

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 11.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1889.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

LOUIS DRAYCOTT.

BY MRS R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.

Author of "Geoffrey Stirling," etc. etc.

CHAPTER III. LUCILLE.

KEZIA explained her agitation, on the occasion described in my last chapter, by saying that she had been thinking of "the Mistress," and wishing she could have lived to see Master Randall so happy, and with such a light of gladness in the eyes that were like her own. Kezia always speaks of our mother as "the Mistress," as though there were none other, and never could be. Many an hour of watching had the faithful creature spent with me beside that mother's bed of pain; many precious memories were hers and mine, of words, and looks, and fond imaginings about the son who still, to her, was but the stripling she had parted with in the years that were past.

To the mother, the children never really grow old. To her they are compassed about so closely with all sweet and childish memories that, like a garlanded tree garlanded with climbing plants, they seem ever young and fresh.

So to mother—Randall was always "the boy."

I cried with Kezia, for company, when she told me of these thoughts of hers; but we were careful not to depress Sister Charlotte. Indeed, I trembled for the effect of the excitement that a marriage in the family would bring along with it. But she kept up very well considering; and Lucille, always gentle, though so sprightly, soothed her with pretty, loving ways and words, and bore with her tenderly when she was what Kezia called "a bit tetchy;" indeed we felt, day by day, what a lucky fellow Randall was, and what a bright

and happy prospect lay before him. Poor fellow! he was desperately in love.

Love is, like many other diseases, far more severe in middle life than in youth. All the lonely years that lie in the past seem to gather themselves together and clamour for their share of the present. Long lack of close and tender sympathy makes content the sweeter when it comes.

It was beautiful to me to see the new happiness that had come thus late in the day of life to my brother Randall; and, as to Lucille, Kezia and I thought she grew prettier every day.

But Mrs. McGregor was not alone in the world. Indeed, she was very much otherwise. She had four boys—creatures whom Sister Charlotte and myself could not away with—a fact their doting mother was, I imagine, fully aware of, since she seldom brought them to No. 8, Prospect Place, and was reserved in speaking of them.

But when we paid a visit to the pretty house in the suburbs inhabited by Lucille McGregor, there they were, of course. Never far away from the little, fair-haired mother; often hanging about her in a rough, yet loving fashion, that would have been picturesque if they had been pretty children. Which they were not. Far from it, indeed. Sister Charlotte often said what an ill-favoured one the departed McGregor must have been; and what "objects" the boys were, to be sure!

These dreadful brats were the one drawback to our satisfaction in our brother's marriage. But do you think we dared say so? Not a bit of it! He took to them as a foster-mother to the aliens she has hatched. They were Lucille's; that was enough for him. And Lucille, on her part, took it all as a matter of course. She would tell us, smiling into our faces, that

"the boys" had taken Randall into the Park to feed the ducks, and that his coat-pockets were enormously distended on either side with crusts of bread for that purpose.

At this Sister Charlotte would sniff, and stare through the window, while I turned to some other subject as quickly as possible. But I don't believe Lucille ever so much as noticed our embarrassment.

She was perfectly happy, utterly content. To say the truth, I expect Randall would have had but small chance with her if he had not worshipped at the shrine of those four idols of hers; for we learned later on that he had used all manner of wiles with them from the beginning, and had caused himself to be regarded by them as a species of good angel and purveyor of delights.

It seemed that Kezia had met them—"the crew of them," as she put it—our brother in the midst, and all the boys hanging round, and had drawn her own conclusions, yet felt bound in honour to say nothing to us.

"For better, for wuss, Miss Dacie," said she, when all these things came to be explained—"that's what the Book says; and I reckon them brats is the wuss for Master Randall."

However, the brats, looked upon in the light of a burden, sat lightly upon Randall, and we were happy with a happiness reflected from his.

At last came a morning upon which I had to break a piece of domestic news to Kezia.

"Kezia," I said, solemnly, "I wish you to bake a large plum-cake, ready for next Wednesday. The fact is, Mrs. McGregor is going away for the day to visit some friends, and the Major wishes the four—ahem!—young gentlemen—to come to tea here."

"It's nothing but what I looked for," said Kezia, resignedly. "I'll put all the chinay ornaments i' the big cupboard, and lock 'em up, and I'll make the cake, never fear, Miss Dacie. Will I be puttin' currants or sultanas in that there cake? Happen, too, you'd like a sugar-plum or two stuck a-top, for to give it a countenance, as they say?"

So all went well, and a whole shower of sugar-plums appeared to have fallen on the cake Kezia made, and stuck there—not only white ones, but beautiful pink ones. It was a "thing of beauty and a joy for ever" to the eager eyes of our young guests.

The eldest boy was three years ahead of the others; the rest dreadfully near together, and moved by a common impulse, doing this or that all at the same time, and in exactly the same way.

This leader of the flock, Dumphie by name ("such a name!" as Sister Charlotte remarked), was, as it were, the main-spring of the united action, "Dumphie says this, or Dumphie says that," appearing to carry conviction to one and all. "Dumphie says so," settled all domestic disputes, in the spirit of the old saying, "The King can do no wrong."

They came, in a square of four, walking two and two, in front of a dejected-looking nurse-maid. Dumphie rang the bell. Glenie, the youngest—Glenarvon McGregor—"What a name!" as Sister Charlotte remarked behind Lucille's back—climbed the steps with difficulty, but sternly refused assistance.

Dumphie went up the steps without help; why then should not he?

Randall was a little late that day, and Sister Charlotte was not quite ready, so the four boys were left in the front parlour by themselves.

That is—with Polyanthus, the yellow-crested cockatoo, whom I have omitted from my portrait-gallery of the Prospect Place household.

Polly was an ancient and venerable bird, and somewhat scantily clothed with feathers. On the other hand she was of an almost supernatural intelligence, and looked upon by us in the light of a friend—I had almost said a Christian.

"Polly will keep those creatures amused," Charlotte had said the night before; and apparently, such turned out to be the case, though it may be suggested that the amusement in question was a very one-sided game. When I went into the room there sat the four boys, bright-eyed, large-eared monsters! Dumphie—Dumphie struck me as being quite the ugliest of the four—sat in grave and dignified fashion, surrounded by his satellites on Sister Charlotte's couch, with a long, white tail-feather in his hand by way of sceptre!

Polly, meanwhile, in strong, if not polished language, vituperated from the outside of her cage.

Dumphie, the others listening eagerly, expressed his regret at the state of affairs; but as to the tail-feather, "Polly left it there."

"Polly left it there; Dumphie says so," chorussed the rest.

What could any one do with such children?

I hastily secreted the feather, and only just in time, for Kezia opened the door to usher in Sister Charlotte, arrayed in her best cap and with her best manners on.

Dumphy, I regret to say, was not one whit impressed. He surveyed her, critically, with quiet, observant eyes, and I saw, with annoyance, that Kezia held her apron to the corner of her mouth as she left the room.

I regretted still more to notice that the four boys—gnomes I thought they looked like—kept turning wistful glances to the drawer wherein lurked Polly's tail-feather. They were evidently smarting under a sense of having been defrauded of the goods the gods had provided for their amusement; and I trembled to think what might be the effect upon Sister Charlotte, if she should learn that Polly had suffered a cruel loss.

There sat the gnomes all in a row, alert and gluttonous. Their eyes grew round and eager, as the cake with its crown of sugar-plums appeared. Their ears—what ears they had!—seemed to stand out further and further from their heads. Yet, when Dumphy told us (pathetically) that "poor papa never saw Glennie"—evidently convinced that Providence had dealt hardly with the late Colonel McGregor in this matter—there was something about the boy that constrained Sister Charlotte and myself to feign a sympathy we did not feel.

As I looked at and listened to Lucille's boys I felt that she deserved no little credit for her devotion to them; all unknowing that in a time to come I should have to do bitter mental penance for the thought.

For how could I presage what part a creature like Dumphy should yet play in the drama of our lives; how could I tell that that wide mouth of his was destined to speak words of comfort and of wisdom in my dire extremity; or that I should find strength and consolation in the touch of his hand, in the girdle of his arm?

Presently, Dumphy, with all the dignity of a monarch announcing to his subjects the advent of some foreign potentate, said gravely: "Papa Birt is here," at which the other three rose to their feet—Glennie overturning himself in the excitement of the moment, and having to be reversed by the united action of his entire family, and set upon his feet right under Randall's nose, as he came into the room.

"Hollo, my little chap!" said Randall,

hoisting Glennie—cake and all—on to his shoulder. The rest clustered round my brother's legs, all talking at once.

Sister Charlotte stared out of the window. I lifted the lid, and examined into the state of the teapot.

Randall, in the character of "Papa Birt," was something new to us. Apparently, however, the character sat easily and naturally enough upon him.

Later on, a game of romps took place in the back-parlour, our brother Randall personating a bear of morose and savage disposition.

Then the gnomes departed. Not, however, entirely; for Glennie was, presently, seen climbing the steps with the same defiant, self-reliant demeanour as before, and brazenly demanded the "fevther" that Polly had given them.

That trophy restored to him, he walked proudly down the street, while I congratulated Randall on the fact that Sister Charlotte had retired to her room before the romps set in, and was in blissful ignorance of Polly's maltreatment at the hands of Dumphy.

Randall laughed heartily when I explained the state of affairs to him, and stated his conviction that the boy Dumphy was "a cure."

Well, well! Randall seemed to have found in the four of them a cure in quite another sense; for seldom now did we hear anything of hot fits or cold fits, or the "malaise" that follows the two. As he stood there, wiping his face, heated in that riotous game of romps, I thought he looked the picture of health and happiness, and five years younger, at least, than when he first came home from India.

On the day on which Lucille and he were married, the first shower of leaves fell from the poplar-tree, strewing the garden that had, only the day before, been neat and trim.

"I'm sorry for it, Miss Dacie," said Kezia, when I pointed the coincidence out to her, "it's a sign."

When Kezia said anything was a "sign," no one ever presumed to make any reply. She was a north-country woman, and, as such, an adept in such matters.

As she now spoke, the poplar bowed its plumed head and sobbed and shivered as it shook in the first wind of autumn, and the rain beat sharply on the pane, while the gas-lamp at the entrance of Prospect Place flickered and fluttered in its glass house.

I got a fit of what Sister Charlotte calls the "creeps." In other words, I felt as if some one were pouring cold water down my back.

"Draw the curtains and light the gas, and put a bit of fire in the front parlour," I said to Ketzia.

And she, not without some muttered grumblings as to "putting past the bright front-bar so early in the year," went off to obey my orders.

There is no pleasanter companion than the first fire of autumn. We greet it with all the delight due to a friend from whom we have been long parted. The very shadows that it casts dance and flicker on the walls in noiseless merriment, glad, or so it seems, to come to life again after their summer sleep. Folding back my wedding garment carefully across my knees, to guard against scorching, I sat watching the glint and gleam of the firelight—the shadows dancing round me gaily.

I smiled as I thought of how Dumphie had conducted himself through the day, presenting himself constantly before me as a calm and dignified master of the ceremonies; comforting Glennie, whose tears were always very near the surface, by saying, "Mother will soon come back, and then Papa Birt will be with us always. We shall play bears with him every night," a dazzling prospect which set Glennie off laughing, with the tears still on his eyelashes.

Then, the way in which this dreadful Dumphie had patronised one Cousin Lisabeth, come to take charge of the gnomes until the bride and bridegroom should return from their short honeymoon; the way in which he assured her that they (the gnomes) would "take care of her," and "be good to her," and the way the other gnomes chimed in and said Amen in their own quaint fashion—how droll it all was to think of! . . .

Then there was Randall's happy face—

"There has never been anything so good in all my life before," that was what Randall had said at the very beginning of it all, "never anything so good—never anything so good."

I must have dropped off to sleep saying the words over and over; for when I woke with a start, the fire had died out into blackness, and the leaping shadows were gone.

The poplar-tree sobbed and shivered in the sigh of the wind, and the rain beat hard upon the panes as I went up the

narrow stair, reproaching myself for having forgotten Sister Charlotte's night-light, and her last spoonful of soothing-mixture.

But it was pleasant to remember that the morning had been fair and bright, and that a ray of sunshine had lit up Lucille's grey gown into a sort of glory as she walked down the church by her husband's side.

AN ARTIST'S SKETCHES IN CANADA.

PART I. TORONTO AND OTTAWA

THE notion of making a pleasure trip through Canada in mid-winter seemed to our Bostonian friends so irrational and eccentric, that we said as little about it as possible up to the last minute of starting, and slipped away off by the Fitchburg and Hoosac Tunnel route, to Buffalo, Niagara, and Canada, almost as if we were bound on a criminal errand.

The fact is, we had associated the name Canada with certain characteristic surroundings, just as most people are apt to associate with places, known to them from early childhood simply by name. It seemed as natural to link Canada with sleighs, snow-shoes, and furs, as it seems natural to associate the Mediterranean with calm, unruffled blue; or Italy with golden sunshine, brilliant colours, and picturesque costumes; or Holland with windmill-dotted pastures and rotund, pipe-smoking burghers swathed in many pairs of breeches.

Probably Canada, seen under a summer sun, with very little to distinguish it from any other country at the same season, would have been as disappointing a realisation of a long-cherished ideal, as is the Mediterranean when the "mistral" blows, or Rome, when the snow lies thick on the Palatine Hill; or the Dutchman when found to tend rather to leanness than to the jovial rotundity impressed upon us as his invariable physical characteristic by familiarity with the works of Gerard Douw and Ostade.

No; Canada and winter had to run hand in hand; and no enumeration of discomforts in store for us by well-meaning friends, whose luxurious notions of existence could not associate travelling for pleasure with the smallest sacrifice of personal convenience, could deter us.

Fresh from a tour through the wonderful cities of the States, with their multifold evidences of wealth, refinement, and rest-

less activity—the work, in many instances, of but a few years—we were anxious to see, for ourselves, how the older growths, owning allegiance to the Union Jack, would compare with them.

We came first to Toronto. We had heard Toronto spoken of as the “Chicago of Canada;” we had read about its “magnificent buildings,” and of its beautiful situation on the shore of Lake Ontario; and we had formed a pleasant picture of Toronto. But we were doomed to chilling disappointment.

Perhaps a pleasure traveller, apt to regard matters from a picturesque and artistic point of view, ought to steer clear of essentially business places; or, at any rate, not to expect that his picturesque and artistic hopes will be realised. At any rate, after we had seen the University and the Queen’s Park, and had in vain tried to penetrate a fringe of warehouses and freight-cars, in order to get a glimpse of the lake, we felt that we had seen Toronto; and, as nobody could tell us of anything else to be seen, we jumped into the dirtiest and shabbiest horse-car we had yet met with in America, and went with it to its destination. This happened to be the suburb of Sherbourne—a collection of neat villa residences, with no gardens to speak of; very new and very spick and span; but we had been spoilt by Brooklyn, and Brookline, and Longwood.

Perhaps we had no right to form a judgement during a fitting visit of a day; but, although it is well known that Toronto is a very active business centre, there did not seem to be the bustle, and rapid movement, and energetic turmoil of the American business centre about its streets; and we were very much struck with the fifth-rate character of the stores. At any rate, we thought more than we said about Toronto.

He who would know the luxury of railway travelling should make a trip on the Canadian Pacific. The Congressional Express between New York and Washington, and the Chicago Vestibule Train, are splendidly luxurious affairs; but they do not surpass for comfort the express trains of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

On the train by which we travelled to Ottawa from Toronto, there were five sorts of passenger-cars; the parlour and sleeping-car, the dining-car, the smoking-car, the ordinary-car, and the Colonist-car. Even the Colonist-car, an accommodation for emigrants and travellers to the north-west, was a work of art as to its fittings, whilst

the parlour and dining-cars might have passed for the luxuriously decorated and furnished rooms of a good house, and the smoking-car contrasted very favourably with the filthy dens provided on American lines.

The darkie conductor converted our seats into beds by the simple process of letting the slope of the car-roof drop; and by extending the seats themselves, we tumbled into a very much more liberal allowance of space than is granted in the state-rooms of Atlantic liners, and at six o’clock the next morning found ourselves in the little station at Ottawa.

When we stepped on to the platform, we realised for the first time fully the Canada of our imagination. Men, so buried in huge skin coats that they resembled animals, invited us to jump into sleighs. The platform was a sheet of ice; the station-yard was deep in snow; the roofs of Ottawa were glittering with snow; the air was bitterly cold, and yet the brightest of suns shone gladly down from the bluest of skies.

The sights of Ottawa are the Parliament Buildings, and the lumber-yards. Guide-books include the Chaudière Falls; but we were fresh from Niagara, and I am afraid we rather smiled at Ottawa’s little cascade. The Parliament Buildings at Ottawa justly rank as second only in grandeur and magnificence on the whole American continent to the Capitol at Washington. Their position is admirably chosen on the summit of a bluff, overlooking on one side the river and the vast stretch of forest-land beyond, and on the other three sides the City and its suburbs.

The policeman on duty who, although the imperial crown shines on his helmet, speaks the most broken of English, informs us that we are at liberty to wander wheresoever we will. So we make a tour of inspection. We visit the beautiful library built in the form of a Chapter House, but, unfortunately, built without due calculation for the natural growth of libraries, so that it is already full. We enter the Senate House, acoustically imperfect, we are told, but very snug-looking with its desks and chairs, and the graceful throne whereon sits Mr. Speaker. We ascend to the Patent Museum, a melancholy mausoleum, wherein the cherished offspring of hundreds of active brains and busy hands—inventions of every conceivable character, from a patent ladies’ bustle to a diving-bell—lie packed away in dust and confusion behind

glass doors. We go outside to the Belvedere, whence we enjoy the panorama of backwoods, and lumber-yards, and majestic river, and jumbled house-roofs, until the bitter wind, filling our eyes with tears and savagely nipping our ears, warns us that loitering is not to be indulged in.

From every point of view these Parliament Buildings are worthy of the dignity of the vast power, of which they are the symbol. There is lavish ornament, yet it does not bewilder or confuse, as is too frequently the case with our modern public buildings at home. The symmetry of the grouping of the three blocks of buildings is admirable: there is no crowding and huddling, but ample space and a complete freedom from encroaching neighbours, which bestows on the whole an air of separateness and uniqueness, which seems to fulfil exactly the conditions required. Best quality of all, perhaps, the work has been conscientiously done, and masonry, metal-work, glass-work, and sculpture will bear the minutest examination. During our stay in the States we had seen many splendid Government and municipal piles of buildings—in New York, in Boston, in Philadelphia, and in Washington, amongst others—but we saw nothing which was so entirely satisfactory as the Parliament Buildings of Ottawa.

To leave Ottawa without seeing something of the lumber trade, would be to leave a pleasure half fulfilled.

What we should consider a large timber-yard, would hardly be noticeable along the wharves of the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River. As far as the eye can stretch is timber of all kinds, of all sizes and shapes. Here, on the water in huge rafts just as it has come down the river for hundreds of miles from the lone lumber-camps of the far North-West, presently to be hauled up an inclined plane into the saw-mills, to reappear in the shape of that clean-cut, fresh-smelling, bright-coloured stack, which is being piled into a railroad car.

Here it is being cut into huge beams and joists; here into delicate laths; here into telegraph-poles. A line of cars on one side is laden with nothing but bark. Another line has for its load nothing but sawdust. The mills are never idle, the timber is always coming and going. And then one can faintly realise the enormous extent of the Canadian forests, although we are surprised to note how much of them still remain for miles, untouched, close to the

great cities; and some idea of the magnitude of the Ottawa lumber trade can be formed from the fact that quite a quarter of the population of the city is engaged in it.

It is in Ottawa that the English visitor is first struck with the apparent anomaly of a people, French not only by descent and in language, but in character, manners, customs, and ideas, who live, work, and enjoy life as loyal subjects of the Queen. There are entire streets in Ottawa, where not only will hardly an inscription in English be seen, but not a word of English be heard. The language, too, is no mere "patois." On the contrary, the French-Canadian gentleman boasts that the French he speaks is that of the old time—of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, of the France uncorrupted by importations of foreign slang and modern "argot." And what we heard certainly confirmed what we had been told. More than half the population are French-Canadians, staunch Roman Catholics, and support their own schools, charities, and religious institutions.

It is a pleasant walk out from Ottawa to the suburb of New Edinburgh, where is Rideau Hall, the residence of the Governor-General. The house stands in extensive grounds—which are open to the public—on the edge of what to our unaccustomed eyes appears to be a dense, impenetrable pine-forest, but which is probably nothing of the kind. We do not know that there is anything particularly exhilarating or cheerful in the position of Rideau Hall, buried in sombre pines, and next door to about as dismal-looking a village as we can call to mind out of China. But we suppose Governor-Generals must not be choosers, and believe that Ottawa, for its size, is, from a social point of view, an exceedingly lively place, whilst the public journals keep us aware of the fact that the Senate House is occasionally more than lively, so that there may be plenty of diversion out of Rideau Hall.

The railway journey from Ottawa to Montreal gives us a very fair notion of the country life of these parts, and to some extent shows us what a genuine forest is. After crossing a long, iron bridge, whence a good view of the Chaudière Falls is obtained, and a second over the Lievre River, we follow the line of the Ottawa River—a magnificent stream, the banks of which are dotted with saw-mills, and the waters with lumber-rafts. Then we enter the forest region. For mile after

mile the train dashes between two apparently impenetrable masses of pine and fir-trees, broken at intervals by valleys which open up far-reaching vistas of forest-clad hill and dale, with here and there a dairy-farm to remind us that the luxuriance of Nature is only tolerated.

Mighty rivers dash down over rocks and boulders, or break into wild cascades, or twirl along darkly and deeply, fed by innumerable streams which seem to spring from the very roots of the solemn pine-trees clustering to the water's edge.

Then there is a break in the procession of dark green branches and black trunks past the car-window; for half an hour we speed by a desolate expanse of snow-covered ground, out of which the charred stumps of fallen forest monarchs start in all sorts of eccentric shapes, and we faintly realise the terrible significance of a forest fire.

We pass villages with quaint names—L'Ange Gardien, Papineauville, Lachute, and a long list of Saints—so redolent of the old France so many hundreds of miles away, that it is hard to realise that we are in the New World. These settlements have a wonderful family likeness. There is generally the main road coming straight up to the railroad track, with its sentinel warning-post, of a Saint Andrew's Cross shape, painted white, and inscribed with the words, "Railroad Crossing," or "Look out for the Engine." There is the scattered assemblage of heavy-eaved houses with dormer windows in the roof, verandahs and green-painted persiennes, the house door being on the level with the first floor, and communicating with the street by a long flight of steps—an arrangement which speaks of the winter days when the snow lies six feet deep. There is the little church with its glittering dome or spire, and its God's Acre filled with the wooden memorial crosses so familiar in the graveyards of old France. There is actually a "Hôtel de la Gare," or an "Estaminet," in most villages; and the strange picture of Old France, living and flourishing in the Far West, is rendered complete by the universal prevalence of the French language.

The chattering amongst the loungers on the station platforms is in French. Our conductor argues volubly in French with the passenger who has entered without a ticket, and we half expect him to shout out "En Route! Allez!" instead of the stereotyped "All aboard!" Indeed, at one

point of the journey, we are the only passengers, in a car full of people, who are speaking English—the nearest approach to it being the conversation of two bearded men, which is in the broadest Scottish.

Nor are the personal characteristics of the passengers less striking. Rugged, weather-beaten faces, and strongly-built figures they have, which testify to a hard life in a hard climate. And, in truth, it must oftentimes be a hard life! After a seemingly endless succession of forest, we pass a solitary homestead situated on a patch, a mere clearing in the heart of the trees. We speed on for miles, and see no other sign of human life, and we try to realise what the life-struggle in that little house during the long, snow-bound winter months must be.

No doubt our neighbour in the fur-coat, with the dark, deep-furrowed face, half hidden in the rough beard, could enlighten us. No white-handed clerks, or smug citizens, form part of our travelling community. The smoking-car is full; but the smoke which fills it is that of pipes and not of cigars, and over the frontier one may travel for weeks without even seeing a pipe. Even the better-dressed men, who have good valises, and wear jewellery, are rough-booted and rough-hatted, as if this land of fighting with nature were no sphere for the costume of the fashionable street.

Gradually the wild character of the country changes. Houses become more frequent, and the forest becomes more broken up. We dash through St. Rose, a charming French village much resorted to by Montreal people in summer time, and the constant clanging of our bell—diversified by the hoarse shriek of our whistle as we cross high-roads—together with the appearance of long lines of huge freight-cars belonging to railroad companies in all parts of the Eastern States, notably refrigerator-cars connected with the Chicago meat industry, prepare us for the end of our journey, and finally we pull up in the dépôt of Montreal.

AN OLD DOCKYARD.

A PATRIARCH among railways is the old line to Greenwich, that was one of the earliest of its kind, and an object of wonder, and even dismay, to the old-fashioned people of other days. Like other patriarchs, our railway has seen itself almost driven out of remembrance by mightier descend-

ants; but, to those who remember it of old times, there is a pathetic touch about the remaining features of a scene where so much has been changed. Pleasant is a glimpse of the Tower over the house-tops; the gilded flame of the Monument; the masts and rigging showing among the chimney-pots; and the wreathing steam from wharf and workshop. Even the chimney pots are pleasant to see, and the old red-ridge tiles; the church spires, too, one in the shape of a fluted column, tapering gracefully toward a gilded weather-cock; and there is another spire, with a gilded dragon at the top, a dragon that seems to threaten a fiery flight towards the City, as it gleams in the wintry sunshine. Then there are the tan-pits of Bermondsey, with the crowded dwellings thereabouts, differing so widely from the ancient associations of the place; the cloistered Abbey, with its secluded grounds, where crowned heads might once seek rest and retirement.

The sight of "Spa Road" suggests another set of associations of green fields and tea-gardens; and Bermondsey Spa, with its pump-house; and of the citizens in wigs and cocked hats, and the dames in hooped petticoats, who might have drunk the waters here long ago. Even the gala nights at the Wells, the fireworks, music, and dances, might have been remembered by some of those who first travelled on this old Greenwich railway, although not the faintest echo of such gaieties lingers about the sombre quarter.

When Bermondsey is passed, there appears a patch or two of cultivated ground, surrounded and cut up by railway lines, but still a morsel of the open fields and gardens that once formed the outer fringe of London hereabouts. There is nothing else to divide the streets of London from the streets of Deptford but this little strip of ground, which you might cross with a hop, skip, and jump. It is just a tattered end of the country, and you might trace it, field after field, widening and stretching out till cornfields were reached, and woods, and open downs, far away in that distance which is hidden by the murky haze.

With Deptford we have rows of small tenements back to back, some old and brown, others new and yellow, and radiating in regular lines, like the wards of a modern prison. But where the cottages are old, their back-yards still hang out signs of former seafaring habits. Here are flagstuffs, like masts, hung with yards

and rigging; here are weather-vanes pointing in all directions; here are pigeon-cotes and hutches made of old ships' timbers, and a bit of a summer-house here and there, in the form of a battered old boat stuck on end. Soon there is a glimpse of a canal, with barges lying here and there, and wharves strewn with casks of all kinds, oil, and tar, and tallow; and then appear tall buildings, with a gleam of turbid waters in the openings, and then you are fairly landed at Deptford Station.

Something of originality still clings to the old station of this patriarchal railway. It was built when railway-stations afforded scope for the imagination. And here is a structure like a temple, or the pump-house of some ancient Spa, black and battered, with the stucco peeling off its peristyle, and a winding staircase within, the descent of which causes all sense of topographical bearings to be for the moment obscured. A jumble of streets leading anywhere and nowhere, with a perfume of fried fish and rancid oil pervading the whole—such is the impression that first strikes a casual observer. But out of the maze rises the composite tower of St. Paul's, in no way resembling its mighty namesake in the City, but surrounded with a wide-stretching graveyard, thickly crowded with white headstones, with here and there some more ambitious monument of one whose estate was ampler than the common.

The churchyard is open all day long, and affords a convenient, well-frequented passage towards river-side Deptford. Here, as you pass along where the turf shows a pale green, among the many graves you may find a reminder of Deptford's seafaring connection. Here rests some ship's captain safe in port. There, sorrowing friends have raised a memorial of one whose bones lie fathoms deep, far away under the blue sea. Sorrowing friends have been sorrowed for in their turn, and sleep under the same memorial stone. Under the church tower once opened the gates of a great vaulted storehouse of the dead; and florid monuments in the church itself raise a moment's curiosity as to the history of some forgotten worthy.

And St. Paul's gives a point of departure. For in an old print—a bird's-eye view of Deptford, with its famous Dockyard, and of the river, with His Majesty's Royal navy there displayed—"the new church" is conspicuous at one end of the picture, while the "old church" shows more modestly on the other flank. The "new

church" is St. Paul's, which was new then; while there away rises the old church tower, that of St. Nicholas, worn and weathered by the storms and frosts of centuries, grim and sad in its present appearance, with a patched and weather-beaten church attached, but hardly seeming to belong to it, partly of stone, and partly of brick—ugly, yet quaint, but above all, forlorn and desolate-looking, with rusty iron gates looking upon damp and discoloured tombstones, and surrounded by dim and dingy dwellings of a doubtful and seamy way of life.

And yet this dismal old church has a record which connects it with the first beginning of the English navy. Just as Stepney, on the other side of the river, is popularly reputed to be the mother church of all those born at sea, so may Saint Nicholas, Deptford, be called the parish church of the British Tar; of those who fought, and conquered, and fell in the naval wars of the last three centuries, whether against the Spaniards in the New World and the Old, under the great captains of Elizabeth's age; or against the Dutch, or the French in succeeding centuries down to the days of Nelson of the Nile, and Duncan of Camperdown. Here were buried, too, many of the gallant sea captains of other days; their monuments still existing, or their names to be traced in the old church registers. Great Admirals and Commanders lodged in Deptford town, and came to worship in old Saint Nicholas Church, in all the pomp of full-blown periwigs, cocked hats, and gold lace. Here, too, came the worshipful chief officers of the Royal Dockyard, the master-shipwrights, the master-surveyors, and master-attendants, in as much ceremony and dignity as the very Admirals—with many a man-of-war captain, as well as the gallant tars, who had climbed on board through the hause-hole, as the saying was, and won their rank by hard and desperate service.

Of the former class, doubtless, was one Captain George Shelvocke, whose monument describes his career. Bred to the sea under the famous Admiral Benbow, himself one of the hause-pipe heroes, our Captain served on board the Royal Navy during the wars of King William and Queen Anne. In the years 1719 to 1722 he made a voyage round the world, which he most wonderfully, and to the great loss of the Spaniards, completed, though in the midst of it he was shipwrecked upon the island of Juan Fernandez

Whether he came upon traces of Alexander Selkirk on that island, the monumental record does not show. But he came to end his days in peace and honour at Deptford, and died there, and was buried in Saint Nicholas Church in 1742.

The reverse of the shield is shown in an extract from the church register given by Lysons, in his "Environ of London": "Captain Thomas Pearce and Lieutenant Logan shot to death for losing the 'Saphire' cowardly, buried August twenty-sixth, 1676." But this was at a time when the character of our naval service was at its lowest ebb, and, perhaps, these unhappy victims were sacrificed to shield the misconduct and incapacity of more distinguished offenders. In contrast again to this melancholy record, we have the notice of a trading captain, who brought his ship safely in after beating off a French privateer, but who died of his wounds soon after.

And again, bringing to mind the infancy of the British navy, we have monuments to the Petts, several of whom are mentioned by Samuel Pepys in his diary. Even then the Petts had been Royal shipwrights and naval constructors for generations. An ancestor had, doubtless, helped to build that noble ship, the "Harry Grace à Dieu;" the progress of which bluff King Harry may have watched from the window of his Royal Palace of Greenwich. A Peter Pett was shipwright to Harry's daughters, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, and helped to fit out the fleet that fought the Spanish Armada; and his son, or grandson, Phineas, was in high favour with the new Stuart dynasty, and fitted out the fleet on all ceremonial occasions when Royal personages had to be conveyed across the seas. In 1637, the same Phineas built the "Sovereign of the Seas" for his Royal master, the largest vessel, it was said, that had been constructed since the "Ark." Anyhow, she was a monstrous war-ship for the times; one hundred and twenty-eight feet long and forty-eight feet broad, and of one thousand six hundred and thirty-seven tons burthen. A later Peter was the first to build a frigate, a faster and more lightly-armed war-ship, of which the name, if not the model, was borrowed from the Venetian navy. Commissioner Pett is mentioned by Pepys as busy at Deptford over the building of a Royal yacht, which was destined to eclipse anything that the Dutchman could build in that way.

And now the monumental record of old Saint Nicholas takes us in another direction. Here in the dignity of coats-of-arms and escutcheons are commemorated sundry of the family of Browne—a name of some literary interest in connection with that of Evelyn of Sayes Court. The Brownes were of the new and courtly kind of gentry; the first to make any mark having been taken up by the proud and magnificent Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth's favourite, and the husband of Amy Robsart. Through the influence of the great Earl, Browne was placed at Court, became clerk of the Green Cloth, gentleman of the Privy Chamber, clerk of the Privy Council. His descendants served the ensuing monarchs with credit and appreciation; the last shown not in salaries—which were but small, and often not paid at all, ready money being scarce at Court—but in grants of perquisites, and patents, and, more grateful still, of Crown lands here and there. And finding King Charles in a good humour one day, Sir Richard Browne got the promise of a parcel of lands lying about his house at Deptford, which he and his father before him had held under a Crown lease. This old house, with its walled gardens, fish-ponds, and great holly hedge, had once belonged to the family of De Sayes, Lords of the Manor of Deptford, and hence was known as Sayes Court—a pleasant river-side dwelling in those days where the Brownes had built and planted, and which presently came to John Evelyn, of "Sylva" and the "Diary," who had married Browne's only child and heiress.

There are monuments to sundry of the Evelyns, too, in the old church of Saint Nicholas; and we may come across the name again in rambling about Deptford.

But now to leave these monuments of the dead and to see what existing relics there are of this famous old dockyard close by, which may justly be called the nursery of the English navy. On the way we may notice some old almshouses, which are said to belong to the Corporation of Trinity House, and which were founded for the benefit of decayed pilots, masters of ships, and the like; and these bring to mind the claims of Deptford to be the mother parish also of those brethren, elder or younger, of that famous guild. And thus we are reminded of buoys and sea marks, whether in tideways or off shoals and sandbanks; of lighthouses shedding their cheerful beams far over the wild seas; of bluff and ruddy light-ships, riding out storms

and tempest; of every mark and warning for mariners, indeed, all round our stormy British waters, for all these hang to the Trinity House, of which the fount and origin is to be found at Deptford.

Originally, the corporation—or guild, rather, as in its original constitution, a guild of pilots and master mariners—was founded by one Thomas Spert, Comptroller of the Navy to King Henry the Eighth, and its title was the "Guild, or Fraternity of the Most Glorious Trinity, and of Deptford Strond, with Masters, Wardens, and Assistants." And here its courts were held, in an old hall pulled down a century ago. And from this beginning it has gone on increasing in influence and power, till now, from the house on Tower Hill, is directed the whole buoyage, beaconage, and pilotage of our coasts.

Well, here the streets slope down to the river, and hereabouts should be the site of the once famous Deptford Dockyard; and here, to all appearance, it still actually exists. Here is the entrance lodge, with its pillars and snug Governmental appearance, where you might expect to see a row of stalwart policemen of the A division vigorously scrutinising and challenging all who enter or go out. The policemen are there, but they do not oppose our progress. Here we may wander at will along these vacant, silent side-walks. The great covered building-slips seem to be still in position; and here is the snug little enclosure where are the official residences of the chiefs of the yard—houses of a pleasant Queen Anne aspect of neatness and propriety. And there are the red brick store-houses, with the turret clock above, on the river frontage, such as we see in the old prints of the dockyards, and these, they say, date originally from the days of Henry the Eighth, when the Yard was first established. There is a pleasant nook, too, of garden and greensward, with a glimpse of the river flashing by, and the big steamers wallowing in the tide, and barges drifting about, and huge cranes and derricks lolling idly over the river-bank.

Keen is the wintry wind that sweeps over the deserted courtyards and howls among the great timber structures; and the pale sunshine that breaks over the wide expanse of solitude only adds to its desolation. Where be the great anchors, the mighty chains, the coils of cable; where the piles of masts and spars; where the planks and timbers; where the shipwrights with saws and hammers, and the

riggers with their hempen labyrinths? Everywhere is emptiness and silence, except that from out the depths of one of these great sheds—which might hide the skeleton of one of the old three-deckers—there comes the melancholy low of a solitary ox and the feeble bleating of sheep.

Yes, our Dockyard has suffered a sad sea change. It is called the Foreign Cattle Market now. And at times it may be lively enough with a ghastly kind of liveliness. A cattle-boat may bring its consignment of foreign herds; carcase dealers may hurry down from their stalls; slaughterers may sharpen their knives for the coming holocaust. That line of freely-ventilated storehouses—where once were stored the hemp, the blocks, the tackle, the fragrant tar, the canvas that was to give wings to the great solid fighting-ships—is now a row of slaughter-houses.

It is a necessary and useful institution, no doubt, this Foreign Cattle Market; and yet the thought that every living animal that lands here, after the purgatory of its troubled sea voyage, is doomed to immediate slaughter, grates unpleasantly on the feelings. It is not quite the same at an ordinary cattle market, for there is, perhaps, a loophole for escape. The particular beast that strikes the eye may, after all, escape the butcher's knife. But here, all who enter here leave hope behind. So that it is not very distressing to find that the importation of live cattle has rapidly fallen off, and that, possibly, sooner or later, there may be no necessity for a foreign cattle market, the importation of dead meat proving a much more economical and profitable process.

So that, after all, it is quite possible that a more glorious destiny may be in store for the old Dockyard, with its fine old memories of tarry hands and hearts of oak. And in that hope and persuasion let us find heart of grace to suggest a few reminiscences of its ancient state.

We may begin with Harry the Eighth, and that famous ship his namesake, and we may end in the days of illustrated newspapers and the infancy of a steam-propelled navy; and in all the time between, we shall find Deptford at work upon the wooden walls of old England.

A famous day it was for Deptford when, with the tide, came sailing up the "Golden Hind," with Francis Drake on board, fresh from his adventurous voyage round the world, and with golden prizes

on board, snatched from the haughty Spaniard. Soon, at the news, came Queen Elizabeth in her Royal barge, to board the famous ship, and to dine with the Captain in his cabin, to congratulate him as her valorous and faithful knight, and laying a sword across his shoulders, bid him "rise Sir Francis." The "Golden Hind," her service over, was laid up in honourable retirement in Deptford Yard, just as we honour Nelson's "Victory" at Portsmouth. Wits, and men of fashion from town, made up parties to visit Deptford and dine on board her. But she grew old and crazy, as ships will do; and a generation arose that recked little of Drake and his bold deeds, and so the old ship was at last broken up for firewood.

Pepys gives us many a glimpse of Deptford, his first visit being the most detailed when he travelled with Major Slingsby and Major Waters, the latter "a deafe and most amorous, melancholy gentleman," whose disappointments in love have made him but indifferent company. They took the water to Redriffe or Rotherhithe, and so on foot to Deptford, a pleasanter walk then, no doubt, than at present, with the river-banks all open, and the pleasant panorama of the gay river traffic passing before their eyes. In the Dockyard he "saw for the first time the great authority" of his place, the "captains of the fleet coming, cap in hand," to pay their respects to him. He was lodged, too, by the store-keeper "with so much respect and honour" that the modest man was quite abashed, and knew not what countenance to put upon it all. But next night there was an alarm, as of an attack upon the Yard. The officials rushed out, the seamen from the ships were hurried ashore, and armed with handspikes, "as fierce as could be." But it is all a drunken disturbance, caused by passing roisterers, and all is quiet again.

All next morning he brisked up and down the Yard noting this and that, and watching the seamen exercise, "which they do already very handsomely." And there was the King's yacht to be seen, and Commissioner Pett, who was busy about it; with the great rope-yards and the making of ship's cables. And then Pepys and his friends take barge to Blackwall, and so by Dock Shore, which is Wapping, no doubt, to the Navy Office in Sything Lane.

Sometimes, too, he met his friend Evelyn, about whom shrewd Pepys, at first ac-

quaintance, queried whether he was quite as wise as he thought himself. Sometimes there was question of paying off ships in the Yard. Or again, there was talk with Sir Nicholas Crispe, who was a marvellous projector, and who proposed to make a great sasse, or harbour, in the King's lands about Deptford, a dock that shall hold two hundred sail of the highest tonnage. But Pepys remembered that the land round about was no longer the King's, but Sir Richard Browne's; and nothing more was heard of the great project, a foreshadowing of the docks to be excavated in the present age.

From Pepys, Captain Shelvocke may take the record with his voyage round the world which, like Francis Drake's, was finished at Deptford Yard; and that may almost bring us to the beginning of Arctic explorations, of which the once famous expeditions of Captain Rosse were surely fitted out from Deptford Yard. The Yard was in full work, too, when Lysons wrote, about 1796, with the French war on hand, and the "Neptune," of ninety-eight guns, on the stocks at Deptford. And we may picture the flags at half-mast high, and the King's ships in the Reach, firing solemn minute-guns as a flotilla, draped in black, set forth from Greenwich Stairs, with Nelson's body on board, to be conveyed to Whitehall.

And hereabouts some old-fashioned prints may come in with views of Deptford Reach, and the fleet lying there at anchor, while guns thunder out salutes, barges flash to and fro, with post-captains and Admirals on board, and all the stir and animation of a naval display. Or we have a frigate, taking in her masts, alongside the sheer-hulk, which Dibdin may have had in his mind; with many another scene of dockyard incidents.

And, lastly, we may hunt out, in a file of the "Illustrated News," a woodcut of the launch of Her Majesty's ship, "Worcester," at Deptford. There was no hurry in shipbuilding in those days; and so we read of the "Worcester" that she was begun as to her frame in 1816, her keel laid in 1819, since when, till this year of grace, 1849, she had been gradually advancing to completion. And a jolly, round, bluff, comfortable-looking ship she is, with a splendid captain's cabin, judging from the bow windows, which her position on the slips displays to advantage. Even then she would not have been hurried into the water, only that her slip was required

for a first-rate war-steamer of the largest calibre ever built, to be called the "Terrible." However, it was a capital launch, and attracted thousands of spectators, all the river-banks being lined with them, with steamers and boats on the water all crammed with sightseers. We don't get such gratis sights in the penny steamers nowadays. But whether the "Worcester," which had a formidable armament of fifty thirty-two pounders, ever performed any doughty deeds of war, is more than we can say, although she still pursues a useful career as a training-ship.

And it is not so many years ago that the "Dreadnought" was broken up—that fine old three-decker of a hospital ship, that had captured a Frenchman at Trafalgar. Before the "Dreadnought," the "Grampus" had the same berth just off Deptford, for the same benign purpose. And there were prison ships before then—sad and dismal-looking hulks, from which strange cries and disconsolate hails would be heard by passing vessels.

And now the Dockyard is left behind, and naval matters driven out of remembrance, as we stumble upon Evelyn Street, and presently upon Sayes Court itself. Not the old house, indeed, nor the gardens, nor the great holly-hedge of which John Evelyn writes so enthusiastically:

"Is there, under heaven, a more glorious and refreshing object of the kind than an impregnable hedge, of about four hundred feet in length, nine feet high, and five feet in diameter, and which I can show in my now ruined garden at Sayes Court—thanks to the Czar of Muscovy—glittering with its armed and varnished leaves?"

Was it through this famous hedge that the Czar Peter amused himself by being trundled in a wheelbarrow? Perhaps it was some other part of the garden that he thus devastated; but it is in evidence that he ruined John Evelyn's garden, and made the house almost uninhabitable after him—a tipsy, dissipated little boor, who was working hard as a shipwright, in Deptford Dockyard, that he might teach his people at home to build ships in their turn.

But, alas! there is not an atom left of all Sayes Court, and what we see is but an open space laid out as a recreation-ground, with a hall for public meetings and a small museum, which an Evelyn of the present day has established for the benefit of the people of Deptford.

DAFFODILS.

I SANG of these bright flowers, you know,
When I was young, long years ago,
And how you praised the song!
Then softly stroked my hair a-down,
And whispered of the poet's crown
That should be mine ere long.

I sang to please you, as the flowers
Were pulled to grace your birthday hours,
That came with coming spring:
I was so happy, for your love
Filled earth below and heaven above—
I could not choose but sing.

I was so happy; and to-day,
Though God hath parted far away
Your unknown life from mine,
A sense of peace my bosom fills;
And lo! I bring fair daffodils,
Belovèd, for a sign.

A sign of love that tires not yet,
That would not, if it could, forget;
Of love by love made brave:
For I can bear your flowers to bring,
And bear to hear the thrushes sing.
Here, by your quiet grave.

And I can bear to turn away,
To leave you sleeping day by day,
What time my task goes on;
The task I shared with you so long,
The work for which love makes me strong,
Though all its joy be gone!

Oh! vanished far from sight and touch,
My heart leaned on your heart too much,
As by your side I crept;
My head was sheltered by your breast,
You toiled and thought while I took rest,
You wakened while I slept.

The way was long, the world was hard,
All fortune's gates were golden-barred,
Alas! we had no key;
God closed in love those tired eyes,
Death gave life's work its crown and prize,
And parted you and me!

Awhile—ah, work-mate, not for long!—
I sing my simple, saddened song,
And learn my lesson plain.
I, yearly, bring your daffodils,
Till far beyond the eternal hills
We meet—nor part again!

THE DAY THAT WAS COMING.

A COMPLETE STORY.

THE hamlet of Buckler's Hard, consisting of two short rows of red-brick cottages, and one more imposing edifice, which stood facing one another across a broad green-sward, lies on the sloping banks of Bewley Water in the New Forest, as if it had been carelessly dropped down there by some freak of Fate, and completely forgotten. It is as secluded as a human settlement well can be; to the right and left, as one stands between the houses and the shore, the broad, shallow, tidal river, and the flowery marshes beside it, curve out of sight between low, wooded hills,

which bound the view on all sides. One narrow, deep-banked lane, and a forest-path, which degenerates to mere guess-work among the labyrinthine water-courses of the marsh, are the only approaches to Buckler's Hard, and they can scarcely be called communications with the outer world.

Yet Buckler's Hard has, or rather has had, its *raison d'être*. Tradition gives out that an enterprising ancestor of the great man, who, in that remote corner of the Forest, is monarch of all he surveys, and rather more, once had a fancy to build ships on his estate of home-grown materials; and that at a conveniently deep place on Bewley Water, within a few miles of the Solent, he set up a ship-yard, and built these red-brick cottages for his shipwrights, and the more imposing edifice near the water for the overseer.

But ship-building at Buckler's Hard had long since become a thing of the past, at the time of my story; the carpenters, joiners, blacksmiths, caulkers, and all the other craftsmen had vanished; their record had faded even from the most patriarchal memory of the place, and the hamlet had become, as such outlying hamlets have the knack of becoming, a sort of black sheep-fold for the less creditable characters of the neighbouring villages of Bewley and Fawley. It had given occasional trouble to the coast-guardsmen down the water, and it was a constant thorn in the side of his lordship's keepers; indeed, the loose notions of its inhabitants with regard to his lordship's game gave the chief justification for the existence and maintenance of a certain terrible canine monster, known to the villagers as the man-dog—not from any unnatural resemblance to the human race, but because he had been bred and trained to track and bring down human game in the shape of hardened and inveterate poachers and trespassers.

Buckler's Hard, you see, was no place for a respectable man to choose to settle in; and when Mr. Eustace Lemaitre took the overseer's house, which had long stood empty, and came to live there with his son Jean-Jacques, and his daughter Lois, his choice of a dwelling gave anything but a favourable impression of his character to the strangers among whom he had come to settle. It was unanimously voted by every one who had the smallest right to a voice in the matter, that there must be something queer about the man; yet the most diligent curiosity could attain him with

nothing more definite than that he was a Frenchman; that he spoke broken English, which was hard to understand; that he had much difficulty in catching the meaning of those who expressed themselves in the slow, broad tongue of southern England; and that he farmed the few acres of ground he had rented from his lordship in a manner as incomprehensible to his neighbours as was the lingo in which he soliloquised with many gesticulations, while he walked about in a curious hat and capacious nether garments, the like of which had never been fashionable on the banks of Bewley Water.

Jean-Jacques was a far more objectively suspicious character than his father, whose agricultural innovations and vehement monologues were plain sailing compared to the mysterious occupation which kept the son a close prisoner, in an upper chamber, six days out of seven, and dyed his fingertips a deep sable black. Sometimes it was surmised that he was a shoemaker; but, if so, whose shoes did he make?

"They would like to know all about it—where we came from, why we came, and the rest," Monsieur Lemaitre would say sometimes, as he sat with his children; "but why should we tell them what they could not understand? The exile, the ostracised patriot, must keep his own secret. We are quiet here, quiet and unmolested. While it is so with us, we can do much that needs to be done to prepare for the great day that is coming; while we sit secluded and unnoticed, our voice may go out through all the earth, and our words to the end of the world. I am a farmer. I till the soil which belongs to the great Father of us all. It is true that until the day comes when the valleys shall be exalted and the hills brought low, his lordship of Bewley will claim these acres that I cultivate as his perquisite of creation. But, if I am only what these people call a tenant-farmer, as I walk about my fields I can think great, burning thoughts, whose breath floats over my crops, leaving them unscathed, to ignite the tares which are ready for the fire and the chaff which cumbars the threshing-floor. Thou, Jean-Jacques, as every one sees, art an odd fellow, who likes to potter with a little machine and blacken his fingers with a dirty mess which does not easily wash off; but if thy wheels are to form part of the great machinery of human progress; if thy black compound is to make on men's minds, marks which fire and blood will

hardly purge away; we must make no outcry, no confidences. These forest folk do not exclaim when the acorn falls and the oak springs. It is a waiting game; but the patient will win their crown in the day that is coming."

Jean-Jacques was more reserved than his father; but after one of these harangues he would pace the room, delivering himself of fiery verses of Victor Hugo's, till his sister felt the tears rising from her heart to her eyes, with wild contagious hope for, and joy in, this great day that was to come.

Lois was much younger than her brother. She could scarcely have been called a woman, if trouble and experience had not added weight to her eighteen years. In her native land, or in any place where prejudice was less strong than it was at Buckler's Hard, she would have been called beautiful; but there, her fine, noble face, her tall, graceful figure, her air of distinction, were no claim to popularity, nay, were rather so many overwhelming proofs that she was a stranger and an alien.

The good folk of Bewley and Buckler's Hard did not consider Lois Lemaitre more of a stranger than she was ready to acknowledge herself to be; though, as far as she was concerned, she would rather have felt at home among them. She often wondered if it was merely the foreign accent and ways that formed the barrier, or whether these slow-witted country bumpkins could have discerned and resented the intrinsic, secret difference between the Lemaitres and themselves. Sometimes she found herself wishing that the difference did not exist; though she well knew that these people had no desire to be other than they were, no curiosity to be told or to understand that wonderful doctrine which begins with statistics showing the iniquity of the existing order; proceeds to provide illuminated passports to Utopia; and ends, as often as not, by conducting eager disciples to prison or to exile.

I do not know whether this lukewarmness towards the faith of her father sprang from a lurking tenderness for a certain fine, stalwart young man, Roger Elliott, the son of his lordship's head-keeper. It is possible; but if it was so, Lois Lemaitre did not betray it even to herself.

It has already been said that Buckler's Hard provided plenty of occupation for my lord's keepers; and Elliott senior, who had seen the best days of an active life, was

not averse to allowing a goodly part of the duties, which this outlying Alsatia involved, to slip on to the broad shoulders of his son.

Roger Elliott bore the fatigue of night-watching, and the anxiety of rearing birds, with an equanimity born of unflagging energy; but I do not think that every journey he made across the marshy flats to Buckler's Hard was undeniably and professionally requisite. In fact, every one in the place knew that if Lois Lemaitre had not lived there, Roger Elliott would have found fewer occasions to come and lean over the fence which divided the green from the old ship-yard, while his dogs sat round him, with lolling tongues, giving the ground expectant pats with their tails as their stock of patience gradually dwindled away.

"It's a pity for him," his father would lament. "I fear he's altogether took up wi' she; and as to she, her's far and away too much of a lady to look at the likes o' he. Now, if it'd bin Alice Gregory or Mary Budden, he might 'a done well. But Missy Maisters, she ain't for the likes of he."

"And that's what I can't agree with, Elliott," Mrs. Elliott had answered, more than once, with maternal pride. "Look at our Roger, he's six-foot-two in his stockin's, a fair two inches taller than thee wast when——"

"Thou didna' marry me for my statter, my wench," interposed the keeper, "and why should she take to him for his?"

"I don't say her should. I on'y say he's a fine fellow, wi' hair as curly and crisp as ever a one, and eyes as clear and honest as a lass could look into it; and a lad as never shamed us, nor told a lie, nor wasted his money wi' wrongful doin's. And he earns his wages as under-keeper now; and when thou'rt laid by, maybe his lordship'll make him head-keeper for thy sake, seein' he's more up to the work than the other keepers. Now, that's our Roger, and just tell me if that's the sort of a sweetheart for any girl to turn up her nose at?"

"Nay, wench, there's no talk o' sweet-hearts, nor yet o' turning-up noses; Missy Maisters is proper spoken to all, in as fur as she can be, seein' she were brought up to use furrin' langwidge. But her's far and away above our Roger, and her knows it so well, that there's no need for her to show it."

"Don't tell me that, Elliott," returned his wife, emphatically. "Isn't it known

to every one in Bewley, and right away to Brockenhurst and Lymington, what we are, and respectable folks, too? But just you tell me what those French folks are, and where they came from, and why they came here, and it all depends on what you find to say to that whether or no she's too good for the best young man, bar none, on this estate." To which challenge Mr. Elliott found it discreet to attempt no reply. "You've got nothin' you can say," Mrs. Elliott continued, triumphantly. "You can on'y tell me what I know already—or, perhaps, not quite so much—how this Frenchman come and took the old house at Buckler's Hard, and a bit o' land, and farms it all upside down, and has meals at odd times, and talks to himself as if he was silly. And if his girl is such a great lady, why doesn't she dress as such, and not wear straight-up-and-down petticoats, and old hats, which the housemaids at the great house wouldn't say thank you for them?"

"You needn't get cross, my wench," replied Mr. Elliott, in a conciliatory tone. "I don't know but what they are a bit queer. Still, Mr. Cotterill would never ha' took them as his lordship's tenants if they hadn't shown their papers ansetterer."

"It's my opinion, Elliott," said his wife, gravely, "that Mr. Cotterill let them down very easy, seein' the years that house stood empty before they took it; and for my part I had rather it stood empty still, than that our Roger should be always lingering off there to get a sight of a girl who scarce looks at him, even when he speaks to her as respectful as he does to my lady herself."

Though the main outline of Mrs. Elliott's picture was correct, the last detail was certainly exaggerated. It is impossible to say if Lois Lemaitre's heart beat any faster at the sight of Roger Elliott, but her manner towards him was always gracious; she never expressed any unwelcome surprise when she so frequently found him standing by the gate which led from Bewley towards the woods, or showed any reluctance to accept his escort when he was going her way, which was invariably the case. So it happened on the last evening in August, when twilight was already deepening the shadows of the forest, that Lois, on her way home from Bewley, came upon Roger and his dogs while she had yet three-quarters of the way to go.

"It's a nice evening for a stroll, Miss Lois," the keeper began, as a safe opening

remark; he always felt a little bashful when he had succeeded in waylaying his liege lady.

"It is quite a magnificent evening," returned Lois, with the easily expressed enthusiasm of her nationality. "It makes one love the forest to see it so beautiful. Ah! I shall have great sorrow to say good-bye to this beautiful place."

"What do you mean?" asked Roger, with sudden dread. "You are not going away from Buckler's Hard, are you?"

"It will happen so some day. We have so often said good-bye to places. We have lived in large cities and in places lonelier even than Buckler's Hard. Life has been full of change ever since I can remember."

"That must be a bit wearing," suggested the keeper. "You don't like it, do you?"

"It is not a matter of choice," answered the girl, a little sadly. "It is of no use to think of likes and dislikes unless one has a choice."

"Ah," said Roger, with a long indrawn breath, which might have been a sigh from a more sophisticated organisation, "I can't say yea or nay to that, yet it seems to me that the less choice we have in a matter, the more we think o' what we like and dislike."

Then there was a pause; the path grew narrower, and the keeper fell deferentially behind his companion, while the dogs submissively closed the line of march. Presently he began to speak again.

"Our Lizzie," he said, with some hesitation in his manner, "isn't timid; but she won't walk out here alone, late of an evening as may be now."

"She will not? And why not?"

"Her's feared to, that's why."

"And of what has she fear?" asked Lois.

"Well, she ain't over fond o' gipsies, and such like vagabonds; and then though it's early in the evening for real mischief, still you might come across one or two whose names I could mention if I chose, and who might cut up rough if you saw them with a gun, or a handful o' snares. Anyhow, Miss Lois, you'd far better not be hereabouts alone when it's getting dark, as may be now, if I wasn't here too."

"Thank you, Roger Elliott," replied Lois. "I will bear in mind what you say."

"And them as means mischief will be at it this week and next, and already they've made a good haul of birds to send to Southampton and Portsmouth in time for to-

morrow. There's always birds in the shops the very day they come in season; but they shan't be his lordship's any more, I'll take care."

"Roger," said the girl, quietly, "you're a good, honest man. Does it never strike you that you have a cruel part to fill in this world?"

"Do you mean shooting wild things, miss? Nay, that's not cruel."

"I don't know; but it is not that I mean; it is something about poaching. If I could I would tell you; but English is hard, and I should not make it clear. Only this: my father says a day is coming when people will see more clearly the right from the wrong."

The keeper shook his head.

"Poachers won't, Miss Lois," he replied; "they'll always mix right and wrong, and worry the lives out of we keepers."

"But suppose there were no keepers?"

"No keepers!" exclaimed Roger. "Why, what in the world would happen to the game?"

"The wild creatures," answered the girl, "would no longer be considered as game."

Her companion gave his head an incredulous shake.

"That might do in furrin parts, miss; such as you've been used to; but it wouldn't answer here. His lordship always has preserved, and he always will; and if birds is to be reared, there must be keepers; and as long as there's scamps, some of them'll be poachers, so there you are."

"Yes," said Lois, composedly. "I knew I spoke of what would be strange to you; and now I thank you for bringing me home, and I bid you good night."

"Good night, miss," he replied, with a timid look into his goddess's face; "but you shouldn't talk so any more. If it got to his lordship's ears he might be vexed."

At which friendly warning Lois smiled on him so sweetly that he went away wondering if he might not pluck up heart some day to try his fate; and therewith he fell into such pleasant meditations that he did not hear the approach of his friend the coastguardsman from the next station down the water, until a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice said:

"Just the man I wanted; and, if you're bound for any place in special, I'll jine company for a few minutes."

"I'm going up the brick-yard way," re-

turned Roger; "but if there's anything you want, say the word."

"Well, I want nothing for myself, I'm glad to say. It ain't a Custom-House job, and don't consarn us; but it's an ugly-looking business, and what isn't our business may still be yours."

"I don't care how ugly it looks, if you've only found something out about the scamps who killed yon coveys of birds."

"That I can't quite say," rejoined the coastguardsman, cautiously. "I'll only tell you what I've been watching. It ain't once, and it ain't twenty times as my mate and me have known a boat come sculling down from this direction in the dead o' night, which always meets another boat fur down the water; and then there's something hauled out of one boat into the other, after which they scull off in opposite directions as hard as they can. We've done our best to get to the bottom of it; but what with them being so wary, and changing their times, and having a lighter boat than ours, they always baulked us; but we stuck to it and made somethin' out at last, which it ain't much, but enough to show that nothink is landed here which consarns either Customs or Excise; though whether there isn't some breakage of the game laws isn't quite so positive. Whereby, thinks I, I'll give young Roger the straight tip to be at the old ship-yard, say to-night, after the moon has set, and let him see whether any of his lordship's property gets shipped off down stream to sell for what it'll fetch at Cowes or Southampton. I mentions no names," he concluded, "taint my place to blacken any man's character unless I'm on oath."

"Thank'ee," said Roger. "I'm sorry another man instead o' me should ha'tracked them out; but, so long as we get hold of the rascals it's all the same, and the names is of no consequence. That'll come out soon enough; or even if they go by an alias it won't keep them from getting what they deserve. I shall take Mike with me; he'll make sure of them, and teach them a thing or two they won't forget into the bargain."

Mike was the watch-dog whose name was a terror not only to evil-doers, but to those whose deeds did not come under the jurisdiction of such extreme severity.

"Yes," assented the coastguardsman. "Mike'll be the man for that business. Good night, Roger, and good luck to you."

"Good night, Tom, and thank'ee;" and the two representatives of law and order

parted, the coastguardsman to go back to his station, and the keeper to the kennels, to fetch reinforcements for his night's adventure.

During all that month of August there had been stirring news from Paris. A long expected political crisis was taking place, and a new Chamber of Deputies was to be elected. Day by day the excitement of the contests increased. Candidate strove to outvie candidate in egoistic self-glorification, in altruistic self-devotion, in glowing schemes, in specious promises, in dazzling eloquence, in daring paradox.

Every hoarding in Paris was tapestried with addresses to electors. Every kiosk overflowed with the fugitive publications which such an occasion originates, and which perish from sight and memory when the battle is gained and lost.

Among these was conspicuous a well-printed single sheet, entitled in scarlet letters three inches long, "Le jour qui viendra," "The day that is coming." It was sold for a sou; but its style and fashion would have justified a higher price. Every one bought it; every one read it; every one was astonished at its bold tone, which spared none and sided with none; and every one agreed that, if it did not disappear voluntarily when the excitement had cooled down, its source would inevitably be sought out and suppressed by whatever party gained the upper hand.

But such a search would have been a difficult one. It would probably have been a long while before the French authorities discovered the little hand-press in the upper room whose windows looked out on the solitude of the New Forest and the forsaken water, where the fiery soul of Eustace Lemaitre worked and waited in his exile.

The work the old Communist had undertaken required more than mere enthusiastic zeal; the cost of the press had been a matter of enormous self-denying economy; the continuous strain of production required much patience from both father and son; and when these difficulties were overcome there remained the risk they ran in transporting the precious freight secretly, two or three times a week, down the water, and in transferring it to a French fishing-boat at the river mouth. The owner of this boat, Lemaitre's brother, undertook the most dangerous part of all, that of landing a contraband cargo with his fish, in some

favourable, quiet spot across the Channel. More than once Lemaitre had believed they were watched. Once he knew they had been followed, and a visit from the Custom-House officers confirmed his suspicions. If the crisis had been less urgent, he would have let some time elapse before attempting to send off another supply of papers.

"But," as he said to his son and daughter that evening, when Lois had returned from Bewley, and was helping with the packing, "the crisis is too terrible; we must not flinch, or hesitate. These words we send to-night may be the final, convincing words. And what does it concern these blockheads if we send a paper, of which they could not read or understand a word, to a land of which they know nothing?"

"The less it concerns them," replied Jean-Jacques, in a dubious tone, "the more it will gratify them to know it. And remember if, with the discovery of the paper, the secret of your whereabouts should transpire, one cannot foresee what may happen."

"I do not care for consequences. My life is pledged to action. The word must go forth." As he spoke he took up a revolver, and examined it. "The douanier," he continued, "was a bit of a fool. He could not see the wood for trees. He was looking for the brandy and cigars we had smuggled; he saw a small press, a compositor's desk; that raised no alarm in his mind. Imagine, if he had been a Russian or a compatriot of our own! But a John Bull, he is so sure of being clever; he knows too much to learn anything. Ah, if poor Pierre had but such as he to face on the other side! Lois, my child, when we are gone, go to bed. If we see reason to do so we may land down the water, or we may take the boat round to Hythe."

"Let us hope," said Jean-Jacques, "that no such necessity will occur."

It was always Monsieur Lemaitre who did the talking on these occasions; it was only when the lights were extinguished, and he and his son, bearing their precious freight, had left the house, that he subsided into silence.

Their cautious footsteps were scarcely audible above the many whispers which wander all night long about the woodland and the water, yet some one was on the alert, and discerned them. There was first a low, savage growl, and then a man's voice spoke from the shore, just where the boat lay moored:

"Good night to you! You are stirring about late."

The Lemaitres halted, but they did not speak.

"What are you carrying there?" asked the voice again. And when there was still no answer: "What are you bringing down to the boat?"

"What is that to you?" replied a voice, which both the Elliotts recognised with a start—Roger, of dismay.

But for him, as a keeper, duty was duty, and secret proceedings savoured of poaching. Moreover, he remembered the incomprehensible words that Lois had spoken that very evening.

"It may be all right, sir," he replied, firmly, "but you'd better let us make sure without any fuss. A thing done in the dark, and on the sly, has a nasty look about it."

"We shall want to see what's in that heavy package," added the elder Elliott—who had no grounds for treating Lois's father with consideration—"before we allow you to place it in this boat."

"How do you know we wish to place it in the boat, my good fellow?" rejoined Lemaitre, disdainfully. "But if we do, we shall not ask your permission. We have not been pilfering the game which it is your business to keep for your own plunder, and if you bar our way, we must clear you out of it."

"You won't do that so easily," returned Elliott, angrily. "We've got the dog. He's muzzled, but he'll be a match for you if I loose him, as I shall do when you try to pass me."

"Ah, you threaten, do you? Well, then, so do I; I carry pistols, which I use if you continue to interfere with us."

"Now, sir," cried the keeper, "no bluster; 'twon't fright us, nor help you. If you've got all square there, prove it, like an honest man should, when he's laid himself open to doubt."

But the fiery temper which had brought the old patriot into exile was thoroughly aroused. He gave a sign to his unwilling, hesitating son, and they raised their burden again. Then there was a sound of a hastily opened door, of quick footsteps across the grass, and a voice trembling with agitation came through the darkness, pleading in that unknown tongue which suggested so many suspicions to the illiterate mind.

How the rest all came to pass no one ever knew. It was the elder keeper who

was holding the dog, and who loosed him; but whether before or after the report of Monsieur Lemaitre's pistol, it was impossible to decide when the time of investigation came. The discharge of the pistol harmed no one; for Lois had seized and uplifted her father's arm, so that the weapon went off in the air. Nevertheless, there was a cry of agony, which ended in a smothered gasp and a heavy fall; while the two Lemaitres remained standing, their outline looming out from the dim background of marsh.

"Great heavens!" cried Roger, "Mike has got Miss Lois."

"She should ha' kept out of the row," responded his father, "but any way, he's muzzled; she'll be more frightened than hurt."

In another moment the fierce, eager creature was secure in his master's keeping again, and Monsieur Lemaitre on one side, and Roger on the other, were bending over Lois, whose pale face gleamed in the darkness; but who gave no sign of consciousness.

"Speak, my darling, speak," implored her father; "tell me thou art not hurt."

"She has fainted," said Roger; "let me carry her into the house for you."

"Do not touch her," cried Lemaitre, fiercely. "I am strong enough to carry my child myself. Lay you no finger on her." Then, with wonderful change of tone, "Speak, my pretty one; it is I, thy father, who puts his arms about thee. Ah! she says no word, and how strangely her head droops as I raise her. Come to me, my son, lay thy hand on her bosom; why is she so still? Great Heaven, have they dared to slay my child before my eyes?"

Then Jean-Jacques took up the passive form of his sister in his arms, and went slowly back by the way that he and his father had carried the burden of patriotic prophecy, which they little thought would cost them so dear; and when they had tried, without avail, all the means which their tenderness or their knowledge could suggest, the two men looked into one another's pallid face, and the father said:

"I have been ready for sacrifice all my life; but what day that can come now, will ever atone for this terrible night?"

Poor Monsieur Lemaitre! the bitter blow of his daughter's sudden tragical death was by no means the sum total of his troubles. There was an inquest over her, at which many troublesome questions were asked; and which threw much more publicity on

the former career and present pursuits of the strangers than was pleasant for them, and of which the final consequences, as far as Buckler's Hard was concerned, was the evacuation of the overseer's house—which has stood empty ever since.

The Elliots were acquitted of all blame. The death, the doctors said, was not caused immediately by the dog, which had left no marks on the body of Lois; but resulted from some unsuspected heart-disease, fatally developed by the agitation of the moment. The magistrate decided that the keepers had not exceeded their right in the discharge of their duty; Monsieur Lemaitre ought not to have produced and discharged firearms; and his daughter ought not to have interfered in the fray.

Notwithstanding, Roger Elliott's conscience never fully acquitted him of the death of his first and best love, whose last cry haunts him still, whenever his duties as keeper bring him, on starless summer nights, to the lonely marshes round Buckler's Hard.

From what coign of vantage Monsieur Lemaitre watched those memorable elections, or whether he had the heart to watch them at all, I cannot say. While the stir of them still lasted, the Parisians asked in vain at the kiosks for the broadsheet with the red title.

"Ah! it appears no longer," they said, regretfully; "we knew it would be so, sooner or later; but it was a good sou's worth, while it lasted, 'Le jour qui viendra.'"

CONFESSIONS OF A CARETAKER.

A SERIAL STORY.

By "RITA."

Author of "*Dame Durdan*," "*Darby and Joan*," "*My Lord Concit*," etc.

CHAPTER XX.

"THE LAST VERSE OF THE SONG."

I MIGHT, of course, relate a good many incidents that happened after leaving Miss Anatesta; but, somehow, they haven't much to do with the principal characters in my story, and I don't suppose would be of much interest to any one but myself.

It was quite a year afterwards that I saw Miss Kate again, though she had always kept me informed of her health and her whereabouts, and the progress of the children. When I had the letter that told me she was in town, and would like to see me, I was still at my old occupation

of caretaking, and must say was beginning to get a little tired of it. The fact of knowing my dear young mistress was in town again, and that I should see her pretty face once more, quite cheered me up. She was living in Grosvenor Street, and I went there the evening of the day on which I had received her letter, having secured a young person, a neighbour, to take charge of the house while I left it; for one of my experiences is, that if any one does call to look at an empty house, they are pretty sure to do it just as you've run out on an errand, or to fetch yourself some necessary — caretakers, so far as I can judge, not being above creature-comforts more than any other class of person, though agents appear to think once they're in the house they ought to become "fixtures," like the blinds, and curtain-poles, and grates.

I must confess to feeling a little nervous as I sat in the boudoir, waiting for Miss Kate. I could not help thinking of when I had last seen her, now two years ago, and wondering if she was changed at all, and if she had got over that unfortunate fancy that had once threatened to wreck her life.

Presently, I heard some one singing. Then—a light foot on the stairs, and she ran into the room, her cheeks flushed, her eyes sparkling; just her old, bright, pretty, merry self, and just the old, sweet, familiar greeting:

"Oh, my dear, dear old Jane, how are you?"

My heart seemed to give a great throb of gladness and relief as I caught her in my arms and kissed her. For a moment or two I could not speak; but soon I grew calmer, and could sit quietly down and listen to the accounts of foreign scenes and foreign travel that she gave me. The boys were at a school in the country, and she and Mr. Carruthers had just come up for the season.

"But that's not what I wanted to see you about, Jane," she said, presently. "I don't like the idea of your living that comfortless life you do, so I'm going to ask you to be my housekeeper while I'm in town. Of course at Templecombe there's Mrs. Riley, who's a fixture in the Carruthers family; but here it's different. And when we are not in town, you can stay and take care of the house, if you will, so that at least you've a home always ready, and need not drift about as you've been doing so long."

I suppose I should have been a fool to refuse such an offer. So it is scarcely necessary to say I accepted it; and, after a long talk, we agreed that I should go to my agent next day, and tell him he must find some one else to take charge of the house.

I went home very happy that night. We never alluded to our last meeting, nor, so far as I could see, did Miss Kate seem to have a single recollection of it. Mr. Treayllion's name was never mentioned, and I thought probably she had long forgotten him and the foolish romance that had once made her so unhappy.

She looked as young, as pretty, as mischievous as ever. Her laugh was as light, her words as merry as those of the Kate of old. Only now and then I fancied there was a hard look about her face when it was in repose, and a more frequent lapse into cynicism and sarcasm when she spoke of people than she had once used to display. But these changes and flashes were so swift that I could scarcely be sure they were real; and when her husband came in, and she told him about me, and stood there with her hand slipped through his arm, and teased him in her pretty, wilful way, and I saw his adoring look at her as she talked or laughed, or moved in restless, excited fashion about the room, I thought to myself: "Oh, thank Heaven! she is safe and happy still."

I can safely say I had never been so comfortable in my life as when I took my place as housekeeper to Miss Kate. I had my own room. My duties were very light, and my pretty, sweet, young mistress seemed as if she could never make enough of me.

Not a day passed but she would run into my room for a chat, or have me up to her boudoir, and tell me all her gay doings and how she enjoyed the season, and all its amusements and distractions. And still, like a secret—shared—but unspoken, that one name lay between us with all its memories and all the consciousness that it was in our thoughts.

It was not an unfrequent occurrence for me to sit up in her dressing-room one or two nights in the week, so that her maid, a fine, French young person, with more vanity than sense, might go to bed and save her complexion, as she expressed it. Then I used to do the little services of maid to my young lady as in the old days, and she would chatter away to me while I

brushed her hair, or folded up her lovely gowns, and wraps, and dainty laces.

One night—it was in the early part of June, I remember—she came home from some entertainment, or ball, and I was waiting up for her in the dressing-room.

It was not late—about one o'clock, I think—when I heard the carriage drive up. The footman opened the door, and I heard Mr. Carruthers go into the smoking-room, and presently Miss Kate came into the bedroom which opened out of the room where I was waiting.

I rose from the chair and laid aside the book I had been reading, or dozing over, and then walked over to the door, dividing the two rooms, which stood ajar.

She was standing before the toilet-table, and I saw her face reflected in the glass. What was there in it? Some look—something which, like a flash, carried me back to the day when she had torn off her pretty gold-hued gown, and faced me with a woman's sad and shamed confession of weakness.

For an instant my heart seemed to stand still. Then, she caught sight of me in the glass, and the expression of her face changed.

"You—Jane?" she questioned, in a hurried, absent sort of way. "Where is Félise?"

"Gone to bed, ma'am," I answered. "She said she wasn't feeling well."

She made no remark, only threw off the long, creamy wrap of satin and fur that covered her bare, soft shoulders, and walked into the dressing-room. I followed. She held out her arms and I took off the glittering bracelets that had decked them, and unlaced her gown, and threw her dressing-robe round her, while she seated herself for me to brush out her hair.

She did not speak for some time, though usually she chattered to me from the moment I began toilet operations to the moment I finished. I brushed and combed the dusky, rippled mass of hair that fell to her waist in one luxuriant tangle, and from time to time I looked at her face as I saw it through that lovely, dusky veil, and wondered what she was thinking about.

At last she looked up and caught my eye. I saw a little hot flush rise in her cheeks.

"Oh, Jane!"—she cried suddenly, and then stopped; and her hands went up to her face and she hid it from me, and her breast heaved with a quick, stormy sigh beneath the soft lace and cashmere of her wrapper.

"Miss Kate," I said gravely and almost harshly, "you have met—him—again. I saw it in your face the moment you entered the other room."

Then her hands dropped; she lifted her head and shook back the rich, dusky hair, and her eyes were like stars—so large they were and bright. And oh, how sweet she looked, and young, and fair, and yet—how sad.

"Yes, Jane," she said quietly, "I have met him again, after two years—two long, dreary, empty years that have only served to show me more plainly than ever what a mistake I made in marrying John Carruthers."

I dropped the soft, bright tress of hair. I simply stood and looked in a dazed, stupid way at the mirror—the mirror which showed me her face and mine.

There was something in the words, or, rather, the quiet, despairing way in which they were spoken, which seemed to tell me that remonstrance or rebuke were alike useless.

She had met her fate—as many and many a man and woman does—too late. That was all the story, as yet. How much more of it was still to follow I could not say; I dared not think.

"Don't fancy I am going to be foolish," she went on, her voice cold, and stern, and unlike itself. "That is over and done with, thank goodness. But, Jane, badly as he treated me in the old days, he has not—forgotten. I had my triumph to-night. He can suffer still, and I can make him; at any hour, at any moment, I can deal out to him the shame and humiliation he made me bear once."

"It is a dangerous experiment," I said, gravely. "Oh, my dear, be warned by me. Avoid him; shun him, cost what it may. You fancy you are safe; but, indeed, you are playing with fire, and the scorch and the pain of it will make themselves felt, believe me. If—if you loved your husband, it would not matter; but you have no safeguard, if, as you say, you repent your marriage, and repent it because another man has taught you what you have missed in it—"

"Dear old Croaker," she said laughing, and looking back at me with bright, dark eyes, in which a strange and feverish light burned and flashed. "Always the same wise old Jane, with warnings and prophecies. Don't be afraid of me now. A woman doesn't require to be taught such a lesson as mine twice. I learned it very

perfectly. I am not afraid to practise its results."

"Tell me," I said, "how you met."

"It was not very romantic," she said, with a little, hard laugh. "I have often thought we might meet. It was to be expected that we should do so, soon or late; but when we did, it was never as I had pictured or imagined it. I have been to an 'At Home,' at Lady A——'s, to-night. Lady A—— is one of those women who run after 'somebodies,' and Mr. Tresyllion is a great deal of a 'somebody' now. His books are the rage of the season, and he, consequently, is run after by everybody. Well, I was in the refreshment-room with a tepid youth of the London masher type, who had languidly exerted himself to bring me an ice, and then to remark that it was a 'wa-am evening,' or something equally brilliant. I think our conversation had proceeded no further than that, when I heard a voice behind me say: 'What may I bring you—ice or claret-cup?' I turned slightly, but the voice needed no confirmation. Instinct had told me whose it was. We looked straight at one another. I can answer for myself, I did not change colour. My face was just as it always is; but he— he grew white as death. Then he bowed. It was not his place to do so—first; but I overlooked the breach of etiquette, and the return was so slight that I think before he procured that ice, or had become aware of the fact that his companion desired it, he had also become aware that, between the woman he had known two years before and the woman he met to-night, there was a difference that defied explanation, and disarmed any attempt he might have made to justify himself or his conduct to her. No doubt my mild escort wondered that an ice-cream could impart such brilliance and fluency to the conversation of a woman who had been about as dull as himself a quarter of an hour previously; but he beamed, and melted, and became quite entertaining, and I passed out of the room on his arm, without a word or glance in response to the pleading eyes which had scarcely left my face."

"And was that all?" I asked.

"Not quite. There was music going on upstairs. Not long after I had come back to the drawing-room, I saw that he was going to sing. You know his way of old, Jane—the sort of careless gesture that swept every one and everything aside, as he would seat himself at the piano. There was a large mirror opposite. I could see

his face, but he could not see me, or even guess if I was looking, or listening. I wondered what he would sing. I heard the old, familiar, ringing touch, the clear, full sound of the chords, and then—then, Jane——"

"Yes?" I said, for she suddenly bent her head on her hands, and a little sob escaped her.

"Oh!" she cried, with sudden, passionate wrath, as she sprang to her feet, and began pacing fiercely to and fro the room. "Oh, Jane, Jane, it was shameful, cruel, wicked of him—he sang those words he had written to me—do you remember? I told you about them once, when—when we spoke about him, and——"

"And Mrs. Cray," I interposed, quietly. "Yes, Miss Kate, I remember—'My Lady of Moods.'"

"That was it," she said, the colour flaming in her cheek, and her great eyes flashing through the angry tears—"and he sang it there—to me—me—before all those people!—sang it so that they hushed their idle talk to listen; sang it so that it should ring in my ears, Jane, till I grow mad, or forget, or—die!"

"Oh, Miss Kate!" I entreated, "don't talk so wildly; don't——"

"I can't help it," she cried, "I can't—help—it. Music is the one thing that affects and thrills me, and carries me away. And you know his voice. Fancy it pleading, praying, thrilling in passionate entreaty to one woman whom alone, among a crowd of hundreds, he chose should hear and listen—and understand. That was the worst of it, Jane. I—I could not help myself. I had to listen—I had to understand. And the new verse—the verse I had never heard till to-night—told me a whole story in itself. I can't forget it. Would to Heaven I could!"

"It was ungenerous, unmanly of him," I said bitterly. "But it is only on a par with everything else he has done where you are concerned. For Heaven's sake, for the sake of your own peace of mind, Miss Kate, don't let your thoughts dwell on him. What good can come of it to either of you?"

"None," she said, wearily, "none, Jane. You are quite right. But thought cannot be fettered, or memory either; and though I hate him now, and though I feel I could not bear to touch his hand or look ever into his eyes again, yet he has been able to make me desperately unhappy—to-night."

"But to-morrow," I said, "you will find it easier."

She did not answer for a moment; only stood there and looked at me with eyes that were very mournful, and a face that had turned very pale. Then she lifted both arms, and pushed back the cloud of her hair; and so standing and holding it, for all the world like some lovely little picture just stepped from its frame, she began to sing softly, half to herself, half to me, the words of that song she had heard:

Alas! for the life and the heart and the soul of me,
All that has gone with a day that is done,
She whom I love so—possessing the whole of me,
Leaves me the shadows, and flies to the sun.

Oh, for a tear of her,
Oh, for a fear of her,

Oh, for a day or an hour that was dear of her!
Never a dream but is haunted by smile of her,
Never a thought but recalls every wile of her.

Heart of my heart—she has broken the heart of me,

Soul of my soul—who will never be part of me,
She whom I love—but will never be love of me,
Song of my sorrows—My Lady of Moods!

CHAPTER XXI. A NIGHT OF MORALISING.

As the song ended, her arms fell; a change swept over her. A little ironic laugh parted her lips, and chimed on the stillness.

"Did I say I was unhappy?" she said. "Nonsense, don't believe me, Jane. I am not; I—I won't be. I mean to enjoy life as I never enjoyed it before. Why shouldn't I? Haven't I everything the heart of woman can desire—wealth, position, luxury, love, friendship? And isn't my good old John worth a hundred fickle flirts, with handsome faces, and inconstant hearts?"

"I should say so, my dear," I answered, gravely. "But I'm afraid you may not always think it."

"I shall think it," she said, "if I make up my mind."

She linked her hands together and stood for a moment or two quite still, as if thinking out the subject in its gravity and importance.

The attitude was so pretty, and the little thing looked so sweet that I felt my eyes grow dim as I looked at her—wondering a little, too, in my own mind that the childish, dimpled loveliness of face and figure had so little altered, despite the changes that wifehood and maternity so often bring.

"I wish," I said at last, breaking the silence that was so serious and, perhaps—momentous, "I wish, Miss Kate, you

would make up your mind to avoid this man. It is the sentiment of the acquaintance that is so dangerous. There are memories in the background—and he—he is very fascinating, I know. Remember, older and wiser women than yourself have bent to the charm. Miss Kate, shall I tell you—something?"

"Yes, Jane," she said quickly, turning paler as she looked up and met my eyes.

"He has given up Mrs. Cray," I said.

"And she is a widow now."

"A widow!" she started, and the colour came in a warm, bright flood to her face. "Is that true, really—and—and you think he ought to have married her?"

"Think," I said bitterly, "of course I think it. She wrecked her whole life for him. But, there, that is always the way. What a man has, he ceases to value! If women would only think—would only remember——"

"Don't you think," she said, sadly, "that it must be very hard to do that always? There are feelings that are too strong for one; it is impossible to keep cool and self-controlled. Just up to a certain point one can do it, but beyond——"

"Miss Kate," I cried, in sudden terror, "it has surely never gone beyond with you?"

"You need not ask," she said, wearily.

"I have shown you my whole heart, Jane. You are the earliest friend I have. You know me as no one else knows me. It has been hard, but I think I have won the battle at last; and if I weary you with my confidences, Jane, and if I am as wilful and troublesome as the child you used to scold and punish, you must be patient with me. Remember, I have no one to whom I can speak—to whom I dare speak, but you. And if I had to keep silence; if I had to brood, and brood, and remember, and regret; and fight always—always—the old, terrible conflict with my nature as I know it, with myself as I am—I think I should go mad, Jane, or—kill myself!"

And, looking at her, I thought so too.

I had no sleep that night; I could only think of my pretty dear—the child dearer to me in her womanhood than ever she had been in her childhood—the one human creature in all the earth whom I loved.

To and fro, feverish and restless, I tossed, and memory brought back scene after scene in which she had played a part. All her pretty, bright ways, her mischief, and fun, her caprices, and whims, and the

dare-devilry that ran through her actions, the recklessness which marked her impulses.

Would she ever really change, and grow calm, and tame, and content? Would she ever come to be the sort of woman to whom her household arrangements, her servants' iniquities, her toilettes, her amusements, her visiting-list, and the engagements, distractions, and frivolities of society would be life and occupation? I felt sure she would not.

All the theories and speculations I had heard from Dr. Carnegie and the little American spiritualist came back to my mind.

Why should there be so much suffering? Why so much pain? Why so many tears, and sighs, and sorrows; so much torture for such poor results? I thought of scenes I had witnessed; of powers wrecked by wanton waste of body and mind; of men's strength sapped by infamous tempting; of genius turned to madness; of the selfishness of passion; the misery of lives ill-matched and unsuited; the ingratitude of children; the faithlessness of conjugal life; the treachery of friends; the hypocrisy of religion; the shams, tricks, shifts, and strategies which go to make up the life of man to his fellow man; and the more I thought the more miserable I became, and the more hopeless it all seemed, and I could only toss to and fro—sleepless, fevered, unhappy—and hear, like an echo of my thoughts, the one cry which rings throughout humanity: "What use? What use? What use?"

Look at love, the one passion, as I said somewhere before, that seems to rule or wreck every human life. What folly it is; what waste it is; what misery it is!

Begun on impulse, carried on for caprice, distraction, amusement, suddenly turning into a tyrant, and ruling and tormenting its hapless slaves. Regarded through a veil of illusion that is bound to be rent asunder soon or late, always promising blessings that are rarely if ever realised, dealing out an hour of bliss here and there, to be atoned for by tears of blood, by rack and wrench of fortune; taking the gold of one life, and giving in exchange the dross of another; maddening with spells that defy the analysis of common sense, and laugh reason to scorn; content with nothing short of the very life blood of the heart it calls its own. Oh, surely it must be a sight that makes angels weep—if, indeed, they interest themselves at all

about the lives and troubles of poor humanity!

And what is the moral to this "tale of a sleepless night" as far as I and my story are concerned? I suppose just my fear of Miss Kate and Mr. Tresyllion's renewed acquaintance. For I did fear it; and perhaps all the more because I knew her so well, and knew that everything that could most fascinate and attract her, was bound up in this one "edition of young manhood."

His looks, his manners, his great natural gifts—the strain of sentiment and romance that go to make up a nature at once poetic and melancholy, even in lighthearted youth—his supposed faithlessness, which had hurt her pride, and shown her the danger of the attraction she had dreamed so innocent: all these set themselves in array, and seemed to warn me of danger.

I knew he had not forgotten. I knew that the frail thread of attraction, which had bound him to another woman, had long since been snapped; and I knew that he would not and could not have written and sung those words she had repeated, unless some purpose had been in the background.

The refrain haunted even me. What, then, must it be to her—the inspiration and theme of it?

Oh, for a tear of her.

Oh, for a fear of her.

Oh, for a day or an hour that was dear of her.

If he meant that, he might mean more. So much lay in his power, and Fate always lends herself to the aid of those whose loves seem to be marked "impossible."

No wonder I could not sleep. No wonder I looked forward with dread to the days and weeks that loomed in the distance. I remembered that other season. I knew that it would be a sheer impossibility for Miss Kate to avoid him, unless he took the initiative and left town altogether.

How I wished he would! How I wished I had the courage to ask him! But I felt I could not compromise my mistress's dignity by such an act, or even add to his own vanity by letting him see I feared his attraction for her. No; there seemed nothing to be done but to let things take their course; and by the time I had arrived at this wise conclusion the dawn was lightening and broadening in the East, and I turned round and tried to get an hour's sleep before rising to perform the duties of the day.